

**GOVERNOR'S STATEMENT UPON SIGNING
SENATE BILL NO. 20**

Senate Bill No. 20, which I have signed today, prohibits an engineer from operating a New Jersey Transit train or locomotive while the person's driving privileges are suspended or revoked due to a conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs or a related offense.

Each day, thousands of passengers travel on New Jersey Transit trains with the expectation of arriving safely at their destination. While New Jersey Transit trains have a strong safety record, this bill enhances the public's confidence in New Jersey Transit by ensuring that trains will not be operated by someone who has been proven to have put lives at risk by driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. I commend the bill's sponsors for their efforts to ensure the public's continued trust in the safe operation of New Jersey Transit trains.

The Federal Railroad Administration ("FRA") has expressed concern that this bill may conflict with an existing body of federal safety regulations and thus could be invalidated on the basis of federal preemption. I am skeptical of such a conflict with federal law, which reportedly allows an engineer whose driver's license had been suspended following two drunk driving convictions to continue to operate trains, whereas this bill obviously would prohibit that.

Nevertheless, in order to remove any uncertainty regarding the validity of the bill, I am directing New Jersey Transit to petition the FRA for confirmation that the bill does not conflict with federal regulations, or alternatively, for a waiver of any federal regulations that may cause the bill to be preempted. By eliminating any question about the validity of the prohibition established by this bill, the public may be reassured that New Jersey Transit trains are only operated by engineers who satisfy rigorous safety standards.

Date: August 31, 2016

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo

Chief Counsel to the Governor